

MAYOR'S BUDGET PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES FOR CITY STAFF

Saint Paul's citizens have good reason to be proud of their city. It has a rich history and strong regional and national images. It has attractive neighborhoods, vibrant business districts and dedicated City employees. I am proud of our strengths. I am encouraged by the enthusiasm I encounter on a daily basis. And, I support the efforts of City employees to improve services to our citizens.

In order for Saint Paul to stay a leader, we must seize new opportunities with creativity and initiative. Clearly we cannot be satisfied with past accomplishments. Saint Paul is in competition with other cities for taxpaying residents and businesses. And, while we seek opportunities to work cooperatively with some of these cities, we cannot forget that people all over the metro area make decisions on where to live and build businesses on the basis of local taxes and fees and the quality of life in these cities. The quality and cost of our services must be affordable and competitive with other public and private providers of the same or similar services.

Budget Philosophy

My budget philosophy is rather simple. On the financing side, create wealth by keeping Saint Paul competitive with other cities in the region. This can be achieved by holding down property tax increases and exercising restraint in other City charges such as business licenses, construction permits, sewer and water charges, street assessments and other fees. And, on the spending side, control expenditures by limiting city services to the ones the city can do best and give tax payers the best price possible.

When the City is the best agency to provide the service, the service should be a good value. It should not cost more for the City to offer the service, without compromising quality, than it would another public, private or nonprofit agency to provide the service. City prices, in the form of taxes and fees, should be competitive with prices charged by others for similar services.

Budget Objectives

I have two fundamental objectives: hold down property taxes by controlling City spending and focus our spending on services that improve the quality of life and contribute to making Saint Paul a safe place where people want to live and do business.

All services and all spending within the City must be analyzed for their need, their affordability and their contribution to the quality of life in Saint Paul. No department should assume that because a budgeted amount or level of service was in one year's adopted budget that that is sufficient justification for keeping it in the next year's budget.

support or that appear to have little prospect of being implemented. On the other hand, departments should propose reductions that they support, even if the reduction can be expected to encounter some opposition.

I look at every expense—even the small ones—as opportunities to save money. If every employee found a way to reduce spending and save \$100 each year, the City would save almost a million dollars in three years. Small changes make big changes over time. Our objective is to make operational changes that produce long term and lasting savings.

And, no department should propose program reductions that it does not